

POPERY
THE
Great CORRUPTION
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

A
SERMON

PREACHED AT

Salters-Hall, Jan. 9, 1734.

By *JOHN BARKER.*

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SEYMOUR

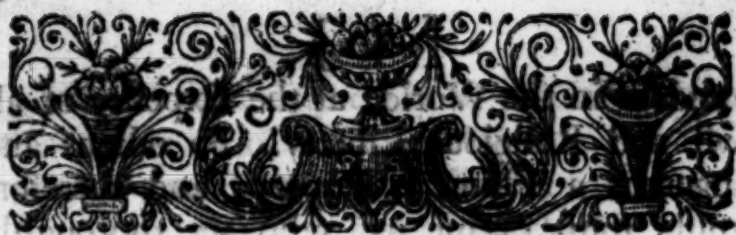


JOHN BAKER

LONDON

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2 C O R. xi. 3.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve, thro' his subtilty; so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

PURSUANT to the Notice which has been publickly given in the several Congregations of Protestant Dissenters in and about this City, I appear here to-day; not so much to begin the Course of Sermons intended to be preach'd in this Place every *Thursday* Morning, against Popery, for some Time to come, as to introduce this Design, and to let you know what you are to expect on this Occasion, and what has induced so many of us to engage in this Business at this particular Juncture. Now I may venture to tell you in the general, and at present, That you may expect to hear, so far as these Sermons go, the Protestant Religion defended, and the Popish Religion fairly charg'd, fully heard, and solemnly condemn'd, as the grand Apostacy of the Christian Church, a gross Corruption of Gospel Simplicity, and a wicked Design to raise the Authority of Men upon the Ruins of the Authority of Christ, and to increase their Wealth, Power, and

Grandeur in the World, at the Expence of all Civil and Religious Liberty. So odious and dangerous a Thing is Popery; and therefore Papists must excuse us, who are thoroughly persuaded of this sad Truth, if we expose and treat it accordingly.

Yet this I will venture to say, and I would chuse to say it here, That we bear no ill Will to the Persons of Papists, and how ill soever we think of their Religion, we pity them who profess it, as deluded People, and are grieved *for the Blindness that has happen'd to them, and for the Hardness of their Hearts*: They very well know, that much has been said and written by Protestants for their Conviction, and to take off the Veil from their Faces, and we charitably believe concerning many of them, that could they get rid of the Prejudices of Education; could they come at more and better Light; might they search the Scriptures, and were not their Inquiries prevented by the terrifying Apprehensions of Censure and Punishment, and were they not intoxicated with the Arts and Sophistry of crafty and designing Men, they would forsake this idolatrous and impure Communion, and readily embrace the Protestant Reformation.

Whether any Papists will attend this Lecture or no, I know not; many there are, it seems, both Priests and Profelytes, in and near this City; should the one Sort see fit, and the other be permitted to attend this Service, I verily believe they would hear enough to convince
any

any candid and unprejudiced Christian alive, that Popery is not the surest Way to Salvation, and that the Protestant Religion, which they so injuriously call *a damnable Heresy*, and so freely and frequently curse, is the very *Truth as it is in Jesus*, and *that Faith which was once deliver'd unto the Saints*. In this Faith we mean to confirm our own People; it is the Design of this Lecture to arm and guard Protestants against the Errors and Dangers of Popery; what therefore naturally arises from the Subjects in debate will be said freely, tho', I hope, Care will be taken not to transgress the Rules of Decency; and should Curiosity, or any other Motive, induce either Popish Priests or People to be present here, I dare say, they will have no just Cause to complain, that they are not treated in this Controversy either as Gentlemen or as Christians. Some of us have heard it has been objected, that any Opportunity of Conversation upon the Matters in dispute between us and the Church of *Rome* has been refus'd, when desir'd; but I believe there is no sufficient Ground for such a Pretence. We firmly believe we have great Advantage in this Controversy in point of Argument, and this will be prov'd and maintain'd freely and fully, whether our Adversaries care to hear it or no. For if the Bishop of *Rome* will confidently assume what neither he nor any Man in the World has a Right to; if Popish Councils and Prelates will decree and impose Falshood, Absurdity, Contradiction, and I know not what
 Stuff

Stuff and Trumpery, and this upon pain of Damnation, and when they have it in their Power, inforce their Authority with all the Cruelties of Persecution, inhuman Torture, and Effusion of Blood, they must expect and bear to be told on't, and till they repent and renounce their Errors and Wickedness, they must stand charg'd with them, and with all the Infamy and Reproach these things deserve. I suppose they'll complain; but if they do, they are to be told, the Fault and Blame is theirs; and this will be shewn and proved to you from Authors and Records which Papists themselves allow to be approved and genuine.

But before I proceed any further in the Account I am to give you of this Lecture, I will a little consider the Text just now read: The Connection and Import of which you may take thus.

The Apostle *Paul* having understood that several great Disorders were crept into the Church of *Corinth*, and that the *Corinthians* had gotten a new Leader, or Leaders, amongst them, who opposed him, and raised a Faction among them, very much to their own Dishonour and his Prejudice, writes them two Letters; in the first of which he tries what Interest and Power he had in this Church, and attempts to break the Faction stirr'd up against him amongst the *Corinthians*, and to rectify their Disorders. Having succeeded in this Attempt, and found by *Titus* that they
repented,

repented, submitted to his Orders, and were by his first Letter brought into a good Disposition of Mind towards him, he writes them this Second Letter, in which he more freely justifies himself, and deals more roundly and sharply with his Opposers: This Design runs thro' the first seven Chapters of this Epistle, and being interrupted by an Exhortation to a liberal Contribution towards the Necessities of their poor Brethren at *Jerusalem*, is afterwards resum'd, Chapter the 10th, and continued in this: *Would to God* (says he) Ver. 1. *you could bear with me a little in my folly.* So he modestly calls his own Self-Defence, which if it had a shew of Vanity they had made it necessary. *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy.* I fear lest the vilifying Speeches of my Adversaries should pervert and mislead you. *For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.* I have form'd you for Christ, and brought you to him, and am in care that you may not be drawn aside from that Subjection and Obedience you owe to him. *But I fear lest by any means,* i. e. some means or other, *as the Serpent beguiled Eve thro' his subtilty,* i. e. the Devil by the Serpent, under the Pretence of Kindness, and other Arts, *So your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* q. d. I fear lest your Hearts divide and rove, I am afraid of your being unchaste and corrupted. Christianity is plain and simple, and no impure Mixtures are to be made or allowed with
it ;

it; no Jewish Observances, no human Inventions, no old or new Traditions; to this singly, without Addition or Alteration, should Christians stick and adhere, keeping to the Truth as it is in Jesus, and preserving the *Simplicity* of the Gospel, not mingling it with any thing that is false and foreign to it, not concealing any part of it, or mixing any Falshood with it, or wresting and perverting the true Sense and Meaning of it to serve our own Ends, the Lusts of others, or any worldly Purposes whatsoever.

Thus the Apostle shews his own fair Practice, and the false and fraudulent Behaviour of his Adversaries as to this in the 4th Chapter of this Epistle, 2d Verse, *We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending our selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

From the Text thus explain'd, I should be led to observe,

I. The Apostle's Account of the Gospel, or Christian Revelation, it is *the Simplicity that is in Christ.*

II. The Concern he expresses lest those who are in possession of the Gospel should be *corrupted from the Simplicity of it.* This he intimates by *godly Jealousy* and *holy Fear.*

Now this as it gives one a pleasing and grateful View of the Gospel, and engages ones
Heart

Heart to receive it on account of its Plainness and Perspicuity, its Simplicity and Purity; so it shews us the great Duty and Business especially of Christian Ministers, and that is, to preserve the Simplicity of the Gospel themselves, and to warn and fortify all under their Care against every sinful and dangerous Corruption. I am strangely mistaken if Popery be not a gross Corruption of Christianity, and a most scandalous Departure from the Simplicity that is in Christ: In opposing therefore the Growth of this, carefully watching all its Motions, taking the Alarm ourselves and giving a faithful Warning to others when we see any of its Emissaries taking pains to propagate this Religion, especially if they do it, or are likely to do it with any Success; is, no doubt, acting in Character as Christian Ministers, and doing the Duty of *Watchmen, Overseers, Shepherds*, and *Stewards* who are intrusted with the rich and invaluable Treasure of the Gospel, and of whom it is required that they be found faithful to God and Christ, to their own Souls and the Souls of others.

Permit me to give you only a short and general View of Popery under the following Heads, and then leave you to conclude, Whether it be not a Corruption of the Simplicity that is in Christ.

1. Many Doctrines of Popery are false and absurd.

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2. Popish Worship is idolatrous.
3. Many Practices it recommends are impious and wicked.
4. The Spirit of Popery is tyrannical, domineering and cruel.

1. Many Doctrines of Popery are false and absurd. There are, I acknowledge, some common Christian Principles in which Protestants and Papists both agree; such as the Being and Perfections of God, the Truth and Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Doctrine of the Trinity, and that of the Death, Sufferings, and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ the Son of God, our only Lord and Saviour; but then Popery corrupts so as well nigh to destroy some of these, and adds many others which are both false, absurd, and dangerous. *For instance*, Papists own the Bible to be the Word of God, and they allow that *all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God*; but then they make the Scripture to depend upon their Church both for the Authority, Truth, and Sense of it. Take away, says the Jesuit, (whom the celebrated Mr. *Chillingworth* so effectually answered) the Authority of the Church, and no Man can be assured that any one Book or Parcel of Scripture was written by divine Inspiration.^a And then they make themselves the only Interpreters of Scripture.

^a *Knot* or *Wilson* the Jesuit, in his *Mercy and Truth*; which Mr. *Chillingworth* answered in his celebrated Piece, entitled, *The Religion of Protestants*.

The Council of *Trent* is a little upon the Reserve as to the former Point; but as to this, it declares roundly, that it belongs to the Church to judge of the true Sense and Meaning of Scripture.^b So that we are never the better for our Bible, till they have put a Sense upon it for us. And as to the Doctrine of Christ's Sufferings and Satisfaction for Sin, it is so corrupted with their impure Mixtures of Merit, Indulgence, and Absolution, as greatly to dishonour the Merits, and eclipse the Glory of the blessed Redeemer. And besides the pure Doctrines of Christianity which they corrupt, what a spurious Offspring do they add — such as those of Tradition, the Seven Sacraments, which are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony — All these the Council of *Trent* declare to be Sacraments; and if any one says they are not so, that they are superfluous, or do not confer Grace, let him (say these Doctors) be accursed.^c Add to these — The Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Communion in one kind, Veneration of Saints and Images, Prayer in an unknown Tongue, auricular Confession, Purgatory; but above all, those of the Supremacy of *St. Peter*, and the Infallibility and Authority of the Church; and you will soon conclude what a Corruption

^a Ecclesiae est judicare de vero sensu & interpretatione scripturarum sacrarum: Sess. 4^{ta}.

^b Co. Tit. Sess. 7. Can. 6, 8.

there is in Popery of the Simplicity of the Christian Doctrine.

2. The Worship of the Church of *Rome* is idolatrous. The Scriptures teach us that God is the only proper Object of Worship: *God is a spirit, and to be worshipped in spirit and truth. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* And they teach us, That Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of Men, and our only Mediator and Advocate with the Father: *There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* This is the pure and simple, the plain and unmixed Doctrine of the Gospel: But Papiſts misapply their Worship, and give that Honour to Creatures which is due to God alone. They have a great Catalogue of Saints, whom they admit into that Order by a solemn Canonization, and then account them Objects of Worship and Intercessors in Heaven for the Church on Earth. The Council of *Trent* determines, that it is good and profitable to invoke the Saints, and declares, that whoever says this is Idolatry, or contrary to the Word of God, or the Honour of Christ, they do *impie sentire*, their Sentiments herein are impious and wicked.^a This is their Doctrine, and they practise accordingly. They have stated Offices and Forms of Prayer, according to which they worship their Saints. Sometimes they pray to particular Saints, sometimes by this and the other Saint,

^a Sess. 25. Decret. de Invoc. Sanct.

sometimes they join God and the Saint, sometimes not; but I will only mention one general Form; it is this: "O all ye Saints and
 " Elect of God, I beseech you by the Love
 " wherewith he hath loved you—help me
 " most miserable Sinner before Death shall
 " snatch me hence, and reconcile me to my
 " Creator, before Hell shall devour me." Is
 this acceptable to God? Is this honourable to
 Christ? Is not this Idolatry?

3. Popery recommends many impious and wicked Practices. The Simplicity of the Gospel, as to Practice, lies very clear and plain before us. The Scriptures teach us the Duty God requires of Men, and they strictly and solemnly require of us Purity of Heart, and Holiness of Life; Repentance towards God, Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and unfeigned, impartial, uniform, and persevering Obedience. The two grand things in Religion are Knowledge and Practice. Christianity is a vital, practical thing. We are nothing and do nothing, if we do not aim and labour after *all holy conversation and godliness.* The *grace of God*, i. e. the Gospel or Doctrine of Grace, *hath appeared unto us, bringing salvation, and teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.* Well, this is true, you'll say, and to be taken on all hands for granted; but how does this affect Popery? Are there not

holy and good Men of both Communions?
 And are there not bad of both? Ungodly, dishonest, intemperate Protestants as well as Papists? Is there much to chuse in this point? Will you put us upon counting Numbers on both sides? Can you say the generality of Protestants are virtuous and good? Have Protestant Countries that *righteousness* amongst them *which exalteth a nation*, and are they in a remarkable and distinguishing manner clearer than Popish ones, from those *sins that are a shame to any people*? Or is the personal Character of a Protestant always or generally better than that of a Papist? Now here, I confess, I very much wish I could make a better Apology for Protestants than I am able. I wish I could more unanswerably appeal to Facts and Numbers on this Question. Would to God the People of our Communion would lay this Matter to heart, and that there were fewer ungodly, dishonest, intemperate and perfidious Protestants in every Place, and every Day than other! — But when I have admitted this Charge, I must take leave to add, that there are some sad Truths to be told of Popery even here, which can't be either denied or excused. Protestants, however they practise, are taught to keep the Commandments of God, and if they break any of them, it is no fault of their Religion: But Papists break the Commandments of God, and teach Men to do so, and their doing so is the fault of their Religion.

Religion. Popery is itself subversive of practical Religion, and really teaches those things and allows those Liberties which naturally tend to and issue in all kinds of Sensuality, Worldliness, and Wickedness. Papists own one for Head of the Church, who can (they say) when he pleases, dispense with several Commands of Christ. *Bellarmino* says it may be affirmed in a good Sense, that Christ has given *Peter* Power, to make that to be Sin which is no Sin, and that which is no Sin, to be Sin.^f The C. of *Trent* affirms—That the Church can dispense with some things forbidden about Marriage in the *Levitical* Law; and if any question this, or say the contrary, they are accursed;^g and they have accordingly taken upon them to reverse many lawful Marriages, and make incestuous ones lawful: The Pope and the Church can (they say) absolve Men from the most solemn Vows, Oaths, and Contracts, and can dispense above and against Law, for this choice Reason—That the Pope's Tribunal and God's are but one.^h The Papists likewise teach the bad Doctrine of Venial Sins, *i. e.* the Person who so sins is not so far guilty as that God can in justice punish him; he does not deserve one Stripe in Hell for Thousands and Millions of these Transgressions. Nay they go farther still, they grant Licenses to commit any sort of Sins.

^f De Excusatione Barclaii, cap. 31.

^g Sess. 24. Can. 3.

^h Taylor's Polem. Disco. 342.

*Rivet*ⁱ tells us he saw a Book at *Paris*, printed in the Year 1500 *cum privilegio*, where are taxed at a certain Rate all Absolutions in the Church of *Rome* for all sorts of Sins; and *Dr. Taylor* says that Pope *Innocent* the Eighth was either the Author or Enlarger of it. And to what do the Doctrines of Intention, Attrition, transferring of Merit, Absolution, and Purgatory tend, but to licentious Wickedness. I will conclude this Head with referring you to a Book, entitled, *The Practical Divinity of Papists proved destructive to Christianity and Men's Souls*, written by the Venerable Mr. *David Clarkson*, some time Tutor to Archbishop *Tillotson*, and I have heard, at his particular Desire; there you will see in a Variety of Instances, and by unquestionable Evidence, that Popery does most shamefully strip God's Commands of all their Authority, and disarm his Threatnings of all their Terror. I am to add lastly,

4. The Spirit of Popery is tyrannical, domineering, and cruel; Papists not only make void the Law of God by their Traditions, and break the Commandments of Christ, and teach Men to do so, but they impose their Errors and Conceits, and bind them on Men's Consciences, and require an implicit Faith and blind Obedience. You must say you believe whether you do or no, and must under-

ⁱ *Rivet's* Castigation of the Jesuit --- It is called, *Taxa Camerae Apostolicae*.

stand with their Understanding, and contrary to your own, or else — What? — Not that which any reasonable Man would think, and has a Right to expect; not Argument, Reason, Scripture, and the Representation of Truth in a fair and convincing Light; but opprobrious Names, solemn Curses, a Sentence of Excommunication, and then cruel Usage, corporal Punishment, and every wholesome Severity, *i. e.* all Kinds of Persecution in their turns, and every Degree of it, against Reason and without Shame: Such as Imprisonment, Confiscation of Goods, Torture, Banishment, and at last Death by Sword or Fire, or in any inhuman or terrifying way whatever. Witness the History of several Ages and Nations, witness your Books of Martyrs, witness the Tragedies acted in *France* and *Ireland*, witness the Inquisition still subsisting, witness what your Fathers told you in their Day; and to confute the false Pretence imposed on weak Minds, that Papists are altered, and that Popery is now become mild and gentle, and Lamb-like, witness the poor Protestants of *Saltzburgh*, who are driven out of their Country at this very time, only for the sake of their Religion, many of whom your own Eyes have seen, your Hearts pitied, and your Hands relieved. While Papists are inveigling and deceiving you they are oppress-
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pressing

pressing and persecuting your Brethren, and actually doing where they have Power, what, where they have none, they artfully excuse, or confidently deny. But, Sirs, let it sharpen your Spirit ever so much against this cruel and false Religion, it is true, unquestionably true, and beyond all Contradiction, that the very Spirit of Popery is a domineering, tyrannical, persecuting, and antichristian Spirit.

And thus I have given you a short and general View of Popery, and from this Account it appears to be a great Corruption of the Simplicity of the Gospel. But I have only touch'd upon these things, and barely shewn you the Surface of this corrupt Religion; my Brethren who follow me will enter more deeply into this Mystery of Iniquity, and carefully represent, and sufficiently confute and expose it.

But I am warranted from this Text to observe,

2. The Concern the Apostle expresses, lest the *Corinthians* should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ: I am, (says he) jealous over you, and I fear lest your minds should be corrupted. Jealousy is a Mixture of Love and Fear; by this the Apostle expresses great Concern for the Good of these Christians, and great Fear and Apprehension of their Danger. He took

took it to be one great part of his Business to give them good Advice and faithful Warning : *He watch'd for their souls as one who was to give an account.* His Jealousy and Fear made him attend with Diligence and Care, and use proper Application and suitable Methods for their Preservation ; from this religious Concern arose this tender and affectionate Caution.

And that the Apostle understood it to be the Duty of Christian Ministers to do the same in like Circumstances, may appear from several Directions and Cautions, such as that *Acts xx. 28*, and following Verses, to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus* : *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock : Also of your selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them : Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.* Again, to the Church of *Rome* he thus writes, *Romans the 16th Chapter, the 17th and 18th Verses, ----- Now I beseech you brethren, mark them*

which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them ; for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, i. e. by flattering and colloquing Words they deceive the plain - hearted and harmless, who suspect no Hurt. I beg leave also to observe, that St. Peter was of the same Mind, as appears from that humble and tender Exhortation in his first Epistle, 5th Chapter, 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Verses. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly ; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepkerd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. I cannot pass over this Passage without observing the modest, humble, and condescending manner in which it is deliver'd, suitably to the Nature of the apostolick Office, which was a service and ministry, not a sovereignty and domination. But such are the confident Pretensions of the Bishops of Rome, that they

they claim the Title of Christ's Vicars, and the Administration of his Kingdom, by Virtue of a Succession from this Apostle. To which purpose they tell us — that our blessed Saviour before he left this Earth, delegated his supreme Authority to St. *Peter* the Prince of the Apostles; and St. *Peter* fixing his See at *Rome*, and dying there, bequeathed this Supremacy to his Successors in that Chair to the end of the World: And therefore the *Romish* Bishop is the Head of the Catholick Church, his Empire the same with Christ's, whose Lieutenant and Delegate he is, and that all the Christian World ought to be subject to him upon pain of Damnation. And as the Successor of St. *Peter*, the Pope is accordingly call'd, his Holiness, the Sovereign Pontiff, our most holy Lord the Pope, and sometimes our Lord God the Pope; and (they say) all Laws human and divine are lodged in his Breast, and that it belongs to him to judge all, and to be judged by none. Exorbitant Pride! horrid Blasphemy! and wretched Abuse of a most pious humble Man! whose own Account of himself is only this, ——— *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ*. Well! is it not our Duty who are Christian Ministers to warn People of such dangerous Pride, Tyranny, and Blasphemy as this? Is not such daring Insult

sult as this upon the Authority of Christ to be check'd ? And are not the Corruptions, Errors, and Sins that grow out of this Stock to be expos'd and rooted up ? And should not Christian People be fed and taught more sincerely and more faithfully ? If you think so, I now tell you this is the Design of this Lecture, and if you judge of it as we do, we hope you will encourage it, by attending here once a Week as long as it lasts, and by attending to the things that are spoken from the Word of God, this being all the Preachers expect from you as the Reward of our Labour.

But I will now enter further into the Reason of our preaching in this manner against Popery, at this particular Juncture.

1. And I very freely declare, (and am glad at my Heart that I am able to do it fully and strongly) that it is not from any Apprehension that our Rulers favour Popery. This is not the Reason. We do not suspect that Popery has any Encouragement from that Quarter. Papists meet with no Smiles at Court, wherever else they find them : There was a Time indeed, (and some of us have Reason to remember it) when the Nation had terrifying Apprehensions of *this* Danger. *Charles the Second*, if he had any Religion, was a Papist : But his Brother, and Successor, abundantly discover'd

ver'd that Popery was the Darling of his Heart, and that he was so set upon the Re-establishment of it here, as to venture at every thing. You know that King *James the Second* carried matters so far as to receive a Nuncio from the Pope, and he sent an Ambassador to *Rome* ; in his Reign Popish Bishops were consecrated in the Royal Chapel, and the free and open Exercise of the Popish Religion was every where set up. A first and second Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, against Law, and for the sake of Papists only, then came out ; and many Bishops for petitioning the King to excuse them and their Clergy from reading the latter of these, were sent to the Prison of the *Tower* ; which Event, as consequent upon many other illegal and arbitrary Proceedings, awaken'd the People of *England* to implore the Prince of *Orange* to come over and rescue the Protestant Religion and Liberties of *England*. He came accordingly, by the good Hand of our God upon him, and brought our Salvation with him : And were this a proper time for it, I should remind you of the general Joy spread thro' the Protestant Nations, upon his being at length made and declar'd our King—How Providence carried that immortal Hero thro' a difficult Reign—How he asserted the Cause of Truth and Liberty—How he humbled the Power of *France*, form'd a Confederacy
which

which broke the Scheme of universal Empire, and left us Men who learned of him how to defend the Liberties, and revenge the Injuries of *Europe*. What followed upon the Death of the brave King *William*, who pursued his Scheme in the following Reign, and who eclips'd, at length, the Glory of his Successor, broke the Confederacy, and led us far back into great Danger of Popery and Slavery, you all know. But there was one Pillar of our Happiness erected by King *William* which those Managers had not Time to pull down, that was, the Protestant Succession in the illustrious House of *Hanover*. King *George I.* succeeded the dead Queen in Peace, and soon after he was seated on the Throne, wisely enter'd into Measures to rectify our disordered State, repair our tottering Constitution, strengthen the Foundations which had been treacherously weaken'd, and render those means impracticable which had been us'd to pave the way for a Popish Pretender.

His present Majesty peaceably succeeded his Royal Father, inherits his Virtues as well as his Crown, and lives and reigns the Patron of Liberty, the Guardian of our Laws, and the Defender of the Protestant Faith. It is now the great Law of *England* — And may it be as that of the

the *Persians* and *Medes*, never to be altered,
 — That no Papist is capable of succeeding
 to the Imperial Crown of these Realms. It
 is indeed one Artifice of Popery, to try by
 any Means to make us careless, or indifferent
 at least, what Religion our Prince is of; and
 something of this sort has of late been hint-
 ed in that pestilent, malignant Paper, called
 the *Craftsman*. — But *Englishmen* easily see
 through that Device; we too well remember
 our Danger in the *Stewarts* Reign, to be-
 lieve this; we know the Absurdity and In-
 consistency of a Popish Head to a Protestant
 Body, and are abundantly thankful to Al-
 mighty God for a Protestant King and Queen,
 surrounded with a large and lovely Offspring,
 adorned with Royal and Princely Virtues,
 and upon whom we look as, under God,
 the Strength and Glory of *Great Britain*,
 and the whole Protestant World. But fur-
 ther,

2. We do not now appear against Popery,
 from any Imagination that the Reformation
 from it has not been unquestionably proved
 to be highly reasonable and absolutely neces-
 sary. The Reformers waited till Error and
 Impiety came up to their height, and con-
 tinued in the *Romish* Church till she was
 most wofully corrupted; and (as one expres-
 ses it) till her Wounds stunk, and became
 incurable; and then they departed from the

Tents of those Men, that they might not be consumed in their Sins. And we not only approve the Reformation, and think it justifiable, but we heartily rejoice in it, and bless God, who inspired the Reformers with so much Zeal and Courage, and gave them such good and great Succels. They bore a noble Testimony for God, they bravely contended for the Authority of Christ, and the Faith once delivered to the Saints, and finely pleaded the Cause of Truth and Liberty, against Men *who loved darknes rather than light, because their deeds are evil*: Their Separation from the *Romish* Communion was unquestionably just and necessary, and the Charge of *Schism* and *Heresy* exhibited against them on this account, was a most unjust Reproach, which they were well able easily to wipe off.

Nor do we forget the noble Stand made by the Clergy and People of *England*, against the return of Popery, in the Reigns I just now mentioned; the Reformation was then bravely defended, and this corrupt Religion effectually exposed with most solid Arguments, and the greatest Strength of Reason, by Men of the first Rank for Learning, Parts and Furniture. The Names of *Chillingworth* and *Barrow*, of *Williams* and *Tillotson*, of *Stillingfleet*, *Patrick*, *Clagget* and *Sherlock*, who all bore so considerable a Part, and made so
good

good a Figure in the Popish Controversy, ought always to be mentioned, by all Protestants, with the greatest Honour; nor are *Owen* and *Clarkson*, and *Pool* and *Baxter* to be overlooked in this Controversy; they were worthy Men, and behaved well in a critical and dangerous Juncture. We have a great Cloud of Witnesses before us, for the Protestant Religion; we follow Men of Renown here; and it is indeed a Matter of some Wonder, that those Men, who so thoroughly disabled the Advocates for Popery, did not write that Religion quite out of the World! But it is not in all Cases enough, it seems, to refer People to Things done a good while ago; our Religion has, indeed, been well defended, and with great Learning and Labour; but particular Occurrences may happen, that make it exceeding proper to review such a Controversy as this, stir us up to imitate the Zeal of our Fathers, and examine the Ground we stand on, for our own fuller Satisfaction, and the Information of the rising Generation. And, which brings me to my main Point, such I apprehend is the present Juncture. Attempts are at this Time made every where about us, by Popish Zealots, to disease and unsettle the Minds of Protestants: We are well informed, that there are great Numbers of Popish Emissaries amongst us, many Mals-

Houses in the several Parts of this City, and other Places, and great Pains taken to reconcile Protestants to Popery, take off those Prejudices and Horrors they have been wont to conceive against it, and to abate by degrees, any Fears of fatal Consequences, if this Religion should be again established in *England*. Popish Catechisms, printed this very Year, and other Books which we have seen, and some of us have in possession, are put into People's Hands, full of Craft and of Assurance; and fresh Informations are frequently sent to many of us, of the great Diligence of the Papists at this Time, and beyond their usual Secrecy, to corrupt the meaner People especially, and to gain over Numbers to their Side. The just Charges we lay against Popery, they roundly deny; — tell People it is now a quite different Thing than what it was formerly; and that they, good Men, have laid aside Cruelty and Persecution, and are for doing no Body any Hurt at all, but from pure Motives of Charity and Religion, induced to take unwearied Pains to recover Backsliders to the Fold of Christ. While Papists use the Subtilty of the Serpent, they would seem to be as harmless as Doves; and they appear on this side the Water in Sheeps Cloathing, who on the other are fierce as ravenous and devouring Wolves: One while they put on a grave and solemn Face,

Face, and tell People, that Salvation out of their Church is impossible ; and therefore beseech them, for the Sake of their Souls, to embrace their Communion. At another time, after courteous Behaviour, much civil Discourse, great good Manners, and a plain and easy Account of their great Power and Dexterity in helping People to Heaven, they strongly and boldly undertake for the Salvation of such as become Converts to them, believing and doing as they appoint and require, saying, — You are secure of Salvation in our Church ; your Happiness is undoubted and unquestionable ; and, my Soul for yours, you shall not, and cannot miscarry.

These confident Undertakers would make People believe, that they can easily secure them from all Danger that arises from Ignorance and Wickedness ; they have Indulgence and Absolution ready, and at hand, for all that ; and the Priest, by the high and mighty Power he receives from the *Pope*, and *St. Peter*, especially at *Easter*, will make every confessing Sinner, for a small Sum, as sound and clean as when he came first into the World. If indeed there should be any doubting of the Truth of this Religion, or the Power of the Priest and the *Pope*, and any Inquiry into and after the sacred Scriptures, those blessed Fountains of
Light

Light and Truth, this is a most dangerous Thing, this shews an heretical Disposition, and poor Souls are soon frightened out of it, with the dreadful Threatnings of Hell and Damnation. Thus is Popery founded in Ignorance and Wickedness, and supported by Craft and Terror.

Well, Sirs, we must not sleep while the Enemy sows these Tares. Error and Sin must not spread their poisonous Roots amongst us unrebuked! while Papists are diligent to deceive, Protestants sure should not be idle. A good Cause must not be left to shift for itself: It becomes us all to take some Pains, if we do indeed fear, that *as the Serpent beguiled Eve thro' his Subtility, so these Managers should corrupt our People from the Simplicity that is in Christ.* And sure I am, a Plea for Separation from the Church of Rome comes very naturally from our Quarter: Protestant Dissenters are exceedingly consistent in the Defence of Truth and Liberty against all Popish Domination and Tyranny: In this we may engage as a common Cause, without a Suspicion of private Interest or Party Views; and for my Part, I cannot but think the present Juncture a loud Call upon us, to lay aside all Differences among ourselves, if any such remain, when the common Enemy of Dissenters, and of all Protestants, is, I know not with what Views, making

making fresh and vigorous Attempts upon us. Besides: Silence at such a Time as this might turn to our Reproach: We might be supposed wanting in our Affection to the Government under which we have the Happiness to live, and in our Zeal against a Popish Pretender and his Adherents, if we did not appear with Readiness and Spirit on the present Occasion; nor is it a small Advantage and Encouragement to us, that we can appear for the Protestant Religion in the most publick Manner, without Offence to our Rulers, and that we are not under the same Inconvenience our Fathers were who pleaded this Cause in the Reigns of former Kings.

And now I have said what I think may be sufficient to let you into the Reason and Fitness of this Lecture against Popery at this Time. I beg Leave to add a Paragraph out of the Preface of the late Reverend Mr. *Bennet* of *Newcastle*, to his Sermons against Popery, — The Words are these — “ Had
 “ Popery been an old Heresy, dead and
 “ buried in the Church a thousand Years ago,
 “ I would not have raked in its Ashes and
 “ given it a Revival; but ’tis a living Religion, the Religion of a great Part of
 “ *Europe*, and what has long been striving
 “ for more Room, endeavouring to extend
 “ its Branches over distant Countries, and
 “ spread its Poison thro’ the Nations round
 “ about.

“ about. And who knows not that ever
 “ since our happy Reformation it has been
 “ waiting for a Return amongst us, seeking an
 “ Hole to creep in at ; and even at this Time,
 “ some think, they see it standing on tip-
 “ toes on the other Side the Water, ready
 “ to make us another Visit.” — This was writ-
 ten in the Year 1714; but, thanks be to God,
 before that Year concluded Things had quite
 another Aspect, the Protestant Religion (often
 rescued by Providence) was again preserved
 by the Protestant Succession taking Place, to
 the Joy and Surprize of us all, and to the
 Glory and Honour of God. O that ever memo-
 rable First of *August*! With what Agitation
 and Transport did we hear King *George* pro-
 claimed? With what Gratitude did we then
 remember King *William* and receive his Lega-
 cy, and with what Ardour and Piety were our
 adoring Eyes and Hearts then lifted up unto
 God? One might have guessed by the Coun-
 tenances of those that met us, who were dis-
 appointed and who preserved.

Well, Sirs, the Corruption we then fear'd,
 it is the Design of this Lecture to oppose ;
 the Blessings we then received, we are now
 setting ourselves to defend ; and this we do,
 because where-ever Popery sets up its Altars,
 Liberty and Religion are made a Sacrifice ;
 as that rises those must fall : Popery threatens
 and grasps at all that's dear to us both as Men
 and

and Christians; no wonder therefore that if any, tho' it be but a distant Danger of this appear, such as we are alarmed, and seize the Opportunity to prevent its Approach by prudent Endeavours and fervent Prayers to the blessed God, whose Servants we are, and whose Cause in this World we believe to be that of Truth and Liberty. This Cause Protestant Dissenters humbly plead with God and Man, well knowing it is our Interest and Duty so to do; for it is easy to foresee, if Popery should ever return hither, who are like to be its first, tho' not its only Sacrifice. In this Service then let us all agree; our Aim as far as I know is singly this, to warn Men of the present Growth and Danger of Popery; to shew them that this is just what it ever was; without any real Difference in either its Principles or its Spirit; to raise and animate that Zeal against it which seems too much abated; to find out its lurking Places, and root it out of Mens Hearts, and shew them the Use and Value of their Bibles— for the Bible, the Bible, (said Mr. *Chillingworth*) is the Religion of Protestants. This Papists conceal; this they corrupt and adulterate; to this they add, and from this they criminally take away; but this Protestants prize and contend for, as the great Rule of our Faith, the Charter of our Privileges, and the only Ground of our eternal Hopes: With this

Sword of the Spirit, let us contend with Error and Sin ; from hence let us learn to preach, and pray, and live ; and when we have obtained *Mercy from the Lord to be found faithful, and having served God and our Generation according to his Will*, shall be dead and gone, may others rise up, and bear a Testimony for God and Christ, and true Religion, not only as we have done, but much more abundantly.

F I N I S.

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